

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	USNW-00	DODE-00	DS-00
	EAP-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIG-00	OMB-00
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00	FMP-00	IIP-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00	/000W	

-----483517 301344Z /38

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6626  
INFO ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA PRIORITY

UNCLAS ACCRA 001581

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [GH](#) [ECOWAS](#)  
SUBJECT: ACCRA III MARCHES ON BEHIND CLOSED DOORS - LIBERIA  
REVIEW COMPLETED

-----  
SUMMARY  
-----

1. (U) There was slow progress on the first day of the Accra III talks on Cote d'Ivoire. Led by President Kufuor and UN Secretary General Annan, all the key parties were in

SIPDIS  
attendance as well as several (mainly West) African heads of state, UN, ECOWAS, AU, and Francophone representatives, and eleven political parties from Cote d'Ivoire. The Presidents and Secretary-General met behind closed doors with the four main leaders from Cote d'Ivoire - Gbagbo, Bedie, Ouattara, and Soro. A press conference scheduled late in the afternoon was cancelled. The talks (which were hoped to last only one day) resumed on July 30, with Liberia bumped to the morning's agenda and Cote d'Ivoire to be resumed later today, due to SYG Annan's, Nigerian President Obasanjo's, and others' travel schedules. Before departing, Obasanjo called for continued peace in Liberia, was generally positive on Cote d'Ivoire talks, and urged greater attention to the Darfur crisis. A communique summarizing the talks is expected later this afternoon. Remainder of talks will be covered in septel. End summary.

-----  
KUFUOR AND ANNAN SET THE TONE  
-----

2. (U) SYG Annan urged flexibility and compromise by all parties. In a speech distributed to the public on July 29, he noted that the following priorities would drive the Accra III talks:

- clarifying the delegation of powers from the President to the Prime Minister
- presidential eligibility
- adopting and implementing legislation under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement
- ending human rights violations and establishing a National Human Rights Commission
- setting a comprehensive timetable for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)
- working with international organizations to restore public services
- setting the stage for free and fair elections in October 2005

3. (SBU) President Kufuor opened the ECOWAS summit with remarks that were not released to the public. He noted the past and ongoing efforts to restore peace to Cote d'Ivoire. He identified "excessive legalities" as the main barrier to the peace process thus far, and stated that "a new tackle that will place more emphasis on a political situation is needed." Kufuor put the onus on Gbagbo and the Ivorian opposition parties to resolve the crisis, and proposed the closed-door agenda described in para 1. He additionally proposed smaller groups of presidents meeting with the various Ivorian parties later in the day, and then regrouping to prepare a public communique on the outcome.

-----  
CLOSED DOORS, TIGHT LIPS  
-----

4. (U) The plenary session on July 29 commenced at 11:00, after the key delegates had arrived. Press were permitted only for a photo-op, and members of the diplomatic community

were not allowed in the conference facility. No agenda was made public, and the delegates were notably quiet over lunch. The SYG, heads of state, Chairperson of the Commission of the AU, ECOWAS Executive Secretary Chambas, and the Ivorian parties worked behind closed doors through lunch.

15. (U) Only two opposition leaders, Soro and Ouattara, made statements to the press while the talks were ongoing on July 29. Neither of their comments were inflammatory and were both cautious in their assessment of the conference's progress.

16. (U) Diplomats were invited to a press conference that was scheduled for 4:00, but was eventually cancelled as the talks continued into early evening. No statement was issued. Sources close to the talks implied that mid-level delegates (e.g., foreign ministers, West African ambassadors, members of Kufuor's press office, and Ghana's MFA) also felt uninformed about the substantive content of the talks. There was much speculation, but little information.

17. (U) One press official remarked that the talks were going long because "Gbagbo's being difficult". Another source close to the talks commented that the delegation was putting more pressure on Gbagbo than on the opposition parties to restore peace to Cote d'Ivoire.

-----  
LIBERIA ON THE AGENDA, AND CONTINUED 'BUZZ' ABOUT DARFUR  
-----

18. (U) When it was clear that the Ivorian peace talks would carry over to July 30, the Liberia review was shifted up in the agenda so SYG Annan, Obasanjo, and others could participate before their departures.

19. (U) In spite of rumors about Darfur appearing on the program at Accra III, the topic was absent from the formal agenda. In Ghanaian Foreign Minister Akufo-Addo's words, "the ECOWAS summit is dealing with West African issues. Darfur is an African issue, but it is not the focus of this meeting." He surmised that Darfur would arise as a topic in informal discussions but underscored that it would not be on the formal agenda. Obasanjo's comments on his departure on July 30, indicate that it did arise on the margins.

110. (U) Obasanjo spoke about three issues on his July 30 midday departure:

- On Liberia, he said that the interim government had not been consulting other parties as agreed, and had been acting unilaterally. A 'mediation committee' of foreign ministers has been set up to ensure that the comprehensive peace agreement holds.
- On Cote d'Ivoire, Obasanjo said that while he could not stay through the afternoon's talks, he expected agreement to be reached by all parties by the end of the day.
- On Darfur, he said the recently-returned fact-finding mission found the situation in Darfur has "rapidly deteriorated". African heads of state are urging the GoS to ensure peace for all Sudanese people. There is currently discussion of sending African troops in to assist with the "woefully inadequate" security provisions that are there, a prospect that the GoS is reportedly open to.

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

11. (U) It is too early to draw conclusions on the success or failure of the Accra III talks. That there was concerted effort by all parties not to say too much publicly suggests serious commitment to the substantive work that was taking place behind closed doors. End comment.  
YATES

NNNN